

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### JEBCO

#### Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Georgia MEP Helps Warrenton Metal Fabricator Gain ISO 9001:2000 Quality Standard Certification, Meeting Customer Needs

##### Client Profile:

Jebco has been a leader in the contract manufacturing business since 1956, producing more than 400,000 mail collection boxes and other government contract items. In recent years, Jebco has expanded its products to include private sector customers. The Warrenton, Georgia, facility has 130 employees.

##### Situation:

J.E. Barrow, Vice President of Jebco, Inc., oversees the manufacture of everything from big blue mailboxes to military tent poles to stainless steel barbecue grills. The wide variety of products produced by the Warrenton contract metal fabrication company makes quality an important issue, especially to Jebco's large customers. "Our commercial and government customers were pushing us to be ISO certified, and we decided we needed to do it," recalls Barrow. "We didn't have enough knowledge of the ISO requirements to undertake it ourselves, and we needed some outside help." Barrow found that outside help at the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (GMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate.

##### Solution:

GMEP's quality specialist, Elliot Price, had worked with Barrow on other projects over the past decade and began to assist Jebco with its quality system implementation. Jebco sought to implement the most recent ISO 9001:2000 standard, which provides a framework for quality management throughout the processes of producing and delivering products and services for the customer. ISO 9000 is what a company does to fulfill the customer's quality requirements and any regulatory requirements while aiming to enhance customer satisfaction and achieve continual improvement.

"We started off with a gap analysis to identify current practices. Current practices were there, they just weren't formalized," notes Price. "We offered some training courses in internal auditing and customer satisfaction, and we also conducted some pre-assessment audits." Price and MEP quality specialists Craig Cochran and Don Pital described the ISO program and what was necessary to meet the requirements to the staff at Jebco. During the implementation, Price returned periodically to let Barrow know if Jebco was on the right track.

"Elliot had a good working knowledge of what would fly and what wouldn't that was very helpful," Barrow says. "Had we undertaken it ourselves, I don't think we would have passed the first go-round because we just didn't have the knowledge the Georgia MEP team had on what the latest registrars would accept." Price and Barrow both say that the biggest challenge of the project was changing mindsets. "We had a hard time seeing the need for some of the requirements of the ISO standard, in particular the need to label or identify all parts on the floor. Everyone knew what parts were what, so we struggled with that for a long time," notes Barrow. "We just had to change the way we did things for a long time."

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Price credits Barrow for being able to make company-wide changes: "What happened here resulted from Barrow's backbreaking effort in making changes. He was the champion that helped drive it." Barrow says that he is also going to use Georgia MEP's services in information technology solutions to integrate his bookkeeping system. Currently, the company uses a spreadsheet-driven system, and Barrow wants to explore more efficient software packages.

### **Results:**

- \* Received ISO certification.
- \* Reduced production errors.
- \* Created formal written procedures.
- \* Achieved a more competitive and profitable position.
- \* Improved competitive edge.

### **Testimonial:**

"If you can say you're ISO certified, it takes the quality issues off the table for most customers."  
J.E. Barrow, Vice President